

**Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County
Archives and Records Management Consulting**

Follow-Up Report

**Submitted by:
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On June 11-12, 2003, I returned to the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County for a follow-up visit. I was asked to assess progress and advise about program direction since I submitted my final report on April 28, 2002.

Assessment of Progress During Phase 1
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I was very impressed by the progress made by the Metropolitan Government during Phase 1, the year since the submission of my final report. In particular, I note the following accomplishments by Metro Clerk Marilyn Swing and the staff of the records management Division:

- Hired a Certified Records Manager, Leah Cothorn, to direct the program.
- Hired a records clerk to assist with the operations of the Metro Records Center.
- Provided invaluable assistance during the move from the Courthouse of the Clerk & Master, Circuit Clerk, and Criminal Clerk.
- Drafted new Codes of Law for Records Management and the Public Records Commission.
- Reviewed existing Records Center procedures and instructions, including records Destruction Authorizations (RDAs).
- Initiated a training program for Metro employees.
- Reviewed the current status of department records officers and recommended changes.
- Worked with Finance and Purchasing to develop a contract for secure destruction of confidential records.
- Revised the three-year plan for records management in Metro government.

This progress is all the more impressive in light of the amount of time and energy devoted to the Courthouse move. The relocation project required almost daily actions by the Records Management Division. The project, however, clearly demonstrated the value of records management to Metropolitan Government.

Phase 2: Future Program Direction

Building upon the successes during Phase 1, I recommend that the Metropolitan Government proceed with Phase 2 of its records management program. During Phase 2 Metro should move forward on the following items presented in my final report from last year:

1. *Administrative Structure.* I was present at a meeting this June to discuss the relationship between archives and records management. In addition to Metro staff, the meeting included the president of the Friends of the Archives and the chairperson of the Public Records Commission. There was a consensus that archives and records management should be combined administratively and that the strongest placement for this combination was as part of the Metropolitan Clerk's Office. Though my original report recommended a separate department, the consensus was that the Clerk's Office was most appropriate at this time.
2. *Changes to Metro Code.* We discussed at length two revised chapters of the Metro Code. The first updates the role and responsibilities of the Public Records Commission. The second establishes a solid foundation for records management and authorizes (for the first time) the Metro Archives. These code changes are very important to the overall success of the records program and should be adopted at the earliest possible time.
3. *Planning and Programming.*
 - A. *Strategic Planning.* My 2002 report began the strategic planning process. During Phase 2, Metro should continue strategic planning with the objective of developing a "master plan" for the combined archives and records management program. I recommend that the next phase of strategic planning focus on the following issues:
 - 1) Focus of the combined program
 - 2) User group identification and needs assessment
 - 3) Potential locations for a joint facility for archives and records management
 - 4) Access and other considerations in the new facility.
 - B. *Architectural Programming.* I recommend that Metro proceed the preparation of an "architectural program" for a combined Metro Archives and Records Center. The purpose of the architectural programming phase is to develop functional requirements and options for the new facility. The project should use my Phase 1 report dated April 28, 2002 for basic data about archives and records management (subject to revision based upon the court relocation and other current projects). The scope of the Phase 2 study should include the following:

- 1) *Storage of semi-active records in the Metropolitan Records Center.* This space should meet the specifications for records centers issued by the National Fire Protection Association.
- 2) *Storage of archival records.* Archival records require temperature and humidity controls as well as additional security measures.
- 3) *Reference and outreach.* The Archives, in particular, requires a secure reading room for researchers to use original records. There also should be meeting space for the Friends of the Archives and other groups interested in archives and history. The facility should have space for exhibits of historical documents and should be designed with tours in mind (especially from school groups).
- 4) *Centralized reformatting of records.* During Phase 2, Metro should determine if it wants to offer centralized reformatting services (digitizing and/or microfilming) in the new facility. If the answer is yes, the new facility will need space for the following: preparation of records, microfilming/scanning, indexing, and quality control.

C. Facilities Programming Resource Referrals. Because of the specialized nature of programming an archives and records management facility, it is important that the team include experts in a number of areas. In order to give Metro the greatest number of options in constructing the team, I will mention some experts with whom I worked on the programming for a new archives and records center for the State of New Jersey. While other professionals have similar expertise, these names will provide a starting point and a benchmark for Metro.

- 1) *Architectural programming of archives and records centers.* It is important that the architect understand the unique requirements for archives and records centers. The New Jersey team included a specialist in programming: Robert Kumlin of Duca/Huder & Kumlin Architects (856-235-0175)
- 2) *Preservation environment for archives.* An archives has special requirements for a preservation environment. It is crucial to have an engineering firm on the project that understands archival needs and can evaluate any existing facility under consideration. The New Jersey team included Ernest Conrad, President of Landmark Facilities Group (203-866-4626)
- 3) *Security and fire protection.* The unique nature of archival records requires a great deal of attention to security and fire protection. The New Jersey team included Joseph Hayes of Gage-Babcock and Associates (914-273-2630).

- 4) *Cost estimating.* The above specialized elements mean that the cost of an archives and records center can be difficult to estimate. In particular, it is useful to have an expert on the team who can compare the costs of different solutions proposed by the programming architect. The New Jersey team included Andrew Kapp of Hanscomb (609-683-4348).

Conclusion

During the past year, Metro has moved forward with records management on a number of fronts, despite the almost overwhelming work required to support the move of the courts.

It is important not to lose momentum now. This means moving forward on four aspects of program development highlighted in my final report: formalization of the administrative reporting structure of archives and records management, revision of sections of the Metro Code, finalization of a strategic plan, and architectural programming of a new records facility.

It has been a pleasure to visit Nashville again and to see the continuing progress with archives and records management. I would be happy to answer any questions about the above report or to assist with the implementation of any of the recommendations.